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OLD SOUTH CHURCH, A.D. 1669

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OLD SOUTH CHURCH, 1669-1919

Boston. Old South church

IMPRINTED FOR THE OLD SOUTH SOCIETY
BY THE PLIMPTON PRESS

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OUR GOODLY HERITAGE HEREIN BRIEFLY RECORDED IS DEDICATED TO THE PRESENT AND PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS OF THE OLD SOUTH CHURCH AND CONGREGATION, IN THE SERIOUS AND CONFIDENT HOPE THAT THEY WILL LOVE AND CHERISH IT, AND SOLEMNLY PLEDGE THEMSELVES TO DO THEIR UTMOST TO MAKE THE OLD SOUTH NOT LESS A RELIGIOUS AND CIVIC POWER IN THE FUTURE THAN IT HAS BEEN IN THE CRITICAL BUT GLORIOUS DAYS IN THE PAST

A COMMUNION ADDRESS

A COMMUNION ADDRESS

SOMETIMES *it seems to one that the life of the spirit is solitary in the extreme, as when this planet at night, shrouded in cloud, buffeted with storm, pelted with hail, climbs its weary way among the infinite spaces. Again we become aware of the glorious fellowship in which the life of the spirit is lived, as when this planet, the atmosphere having become clear and serene at night, travels forth with an endless fellowship of shining worlds above, beneath, round about. It is to the sense of fellowship in the life of the spirit that the text speaks. "Therefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses." The social life in God; that is the meaning of the text; all souls in Him, and all souls capable, through Him, of living in one transcendent fellowship.*

Imagination is the bugler of the mind. One moment you see no army, — nothing but the barracks in the city, apparently empty, — nothing but the tents in the field, apparently silent and deserted. Listen to the notes of the bugler; in response, forth come the multitudes of men falling into line, an army coming from the invisible, in response to that high call. Such is the life of the soul when it is lived truly. Those who have been tempted as we are and have triumphed, those who have sinned as we have sinned, and been forgiven, those who have been bereaved and have found the great consolation, those who have been troubled with a thousand troubles

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Dr. Gordon's Address at the Memorial Communion Service, May 4, 1919.

and have discovered a dwelling of peace, those who have struggled and failed, and struggled again, and won gloriously, are waiting for the bugler's notes to come forth a great army, to pour their inspiration and their love into our lives.

How shall we know the Lord Jesus? Two thousand years of time separate his life from ours; how shall we know him? Only as imagination, guided by the material given in the gospels and in the New Testament, ordered, restrained, and sent forward in its working by fact and by experience of those who lived with Him, only as imagination thus working, legitimately, and with trustworthiness, brings, as it will bring, into the field of our vision the great Master, as he lived in Galilee, as he went from village to village, and from town to town in Galilee, as he spoke by the sea, from the land, and from the boat in which his disciples were with him, as he traveled and grew weary on his journey, and as he went to the great city where he was to die. His person, his aspect, his behavior, his developing character, his sublime spirit, the speaker, the wonderworker, the sufferer, the man who gave his life and who triumphed over death, — all this may come back a great, vivid, glorious reality, but only as we employ the religious imagination. Take that power away, and there is no more sense of Christ in us than there is in an animal by our side. We cannot cherish and we cannot chasten this power of imagination too fully in all the humanities, as well as in our whole faith.

In the second place, let me remind you of the greatness of the past. Science has revolutionized our modern world; applied science has changed the mode of our living, the mode of our business, of our travel, of our intercommunication, and of a hundred other things; and it has clothed with new power many professions that minister to the temporal life of man. For all this we are thankful, infinitely thankful; but this does not imply that we are bigger than they who went before us. Ours is largely the greatness of privilege; those *who went before us had the greatness of nature; native, original, creative power.*

The past is great, immeasurably greater than any present generation. We are but the front wave, breaking on the beach, with the great silent swell and the Almighty push of the sea behind it. Do not let us forget this in our delight in our own age, in our thankfulness that we are born when we are born and set to do our work in this present time; do not let us forget the majesty of the past; no man can be great who ignores it. Do not let this church forget the seven generations that have gone before. Call them up in imagination; strong men and tender, although they could be severe; patient, high-bred, beautiful women; all equal to the struggle, the duty, and the difficulty of life, making this church a centre of the civilization then in the Colony and a voice of thunder and power in the crises through which town and Colony passed. Call them up as the background of your own life, and when you come here to worship, let it not be in your own name only and those of your fellow-worshippers, but in the name of the mighty dead. How wide, deep, rich, reverent, tender should our worship be, and how thrilled with the high humanities of the past and touched with the graces that bloomed on men who were like rock and on women, sad-faced but sweet, who ennobled the church in their day and generation.

Finally, let this grow into a habit of our life; not one service in which we hold in dear, reverent memory the disciples of the Lord Jesus who have preceded us in the faith and fellowship of this church; let it become the habit of our mind, the mood of our heart, so that we shall perpetually live in the atmosphere of a goodly fellowship. I ask you to open the windows of your life, and let all the beautiful faces look in upon it; let the past of your own life, as it runs back into the mystic past of other lives, greet, elevate, chasten and ennoble all your days.

Let me end as I began, with the two aspects of life so real *and so completely complementary, the solitary, the inviolable individuality; that life that we live alone with God, its duty, accountability, its suffering, its discipline, its unsharable existence. Then the other, the divinely ordained fellowship. You have often at sea, as I have, when the sun had gone down and the twilight was deepening into the darkness, felt the utter, almost insupportable, loneliness of your little ship on the wide, wide sea. You have gone below and thought upon the gloomy isolation till you got tired and sick at heart, and before turning in, you have gone on deck once more, to see the whole starry hosts out to bid you welcome and to tell you that the very law by which all these lights are ruled in perfect order is gripping your ship, holding it on its victorious way. We are in awful truth individual, and we are divinely joined in a fellowship across the contemporary world, across the whole breath of history and the whole sweep of the universe. We, with all other souls, live and move and have our being in God.*

OLD SOUTH CHURCH
1669–1884

At the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary Service of the Old South Church, Dr. Gordon delivered an historical discourse, now rewritten by him in extended form.

OLD SOUTH CHURCH

"THE MEMORY OF THE JUST IS BLESSED"

Proverbs 10, 7

HISTORY as a mighty, conscious force is declared in the noble words of this ancient Hebrew proverb. There are the souls of the just, worthy of human remembrance, and there is the just memory by which they are remembered. These two forces, the just who are worthy of remembrance, and the just memory by which they are held in remembrance, are the channels of the chief moral and religious influences in the world. Without them it is difficult to see how God himself could obtain adequate access to the human mind; without them history in the highest sense would be impossible.

In this mighty order of conscious history, tenderly, reverently, gratefully we place the Old South Church today. I shall give a rapid sketch of the church from its founding in 1669 to the close of the pastorate of my immediate predecessor in 1882; it is a long story but a thrilling one.

I. The Founders

THE Third Church of Boston, afterward known as the Old South Church, was organized in May, 1669. That we may gain a more vivid idea of that far distant time let us recall that when the Third Church in Boston was founded Shakespeare had been in his grave only fifty-three years; Bacon forty-three years; Hugo Grotius, the Dutch statesman and jurist, twenty-four years; Descartes, the great French philosopher, nineteen years, and Oliver Cromwell eleven years. At that time the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth was only forty-nine years in the past; now it is nearly three hundred. When the Third Church of Boston was organized John Milton was living in London, at the age of sixty, with five more years of life before him. John Dryden was thirty-eight, John Locke thirty-seven, Spinoza thirty-six, Sir Isaac Newton twenty-six, Leibnitz twenty-three, and Daniel De Foe, the wizard of the world's childhood, was a boy of ten. Thus the immediate historic background and the great world figures in composition with the vigorous men who founded this church make a picture of extraordinary impressiveness, a picture, too, rich in prophecy concerning the future.

The First Church of Boston was founded in 1630 and for the ensuing twenty years was the only church in the town. In 1650, by the hearty concurrence of the First Church, the Second Church was founded. These two churches were the sole Puritan guardians of the religious life of the town for the next nineteen years, and they would have continued for some years longer to be the sole ministers to the religious life of the community had not a sharp and irreconcilable difference of opinion originated in the membership of the First Church.

We came into existence as a church by the agency of a family row; a good, clean row, as we shall see. What was the trouble? The Rev. John Norton, one of the ministers of the First Church, died in 1663; the Rev. John Wilson, his colleague, died in 1667. These were eminent men; they were graduates of Cambridge University, England, thoroughly trained, cosmopolitan in mind, in culture; they were ministers of the Anglican communion who had been driven from that communion for conscience' sake. They came to Boston and in due time were chosen the ministers of the First Church.

They died, as I have said, one in 1663, the other in 1667. The First Church, bereaved of teacher and pastor, turned in search of ministers worthy of those whom they had lost. They speedily found one minister in a young man, born in 1632, the Rev. James Allen, who was chosen and settled, so far as we can discover, without difference of opinion. The church then fixed its eye upon a prominent man, the Reverend John Davenport, minister of the First Church in the colony of New

Haven. The colony had been founded by him and others, and for thirty years he had rendered illustrious service there; he was an eminent man and a godly. The majority of the members of the First Church wanted Mr. Davenport to be their minister; the minority objected on three grounds. Their first objection was that Mr. Davenport was too old; he was seventy; his work was practically done. Why should he be invited to come to Boston to begin a new work when unequal to it? The course of events proved that thus far the dissenters were right, for Mr. Davenport lived only fifteen months after his installation as minister of the First Church of Boston. The second ground of objection was that Mr. Davenport had not been properly dismissed from his church in New Haven. The third objection was the most serious; it was on the question of baptism.

Baptism is a light affair with us, I regret to say; it was a matter of the profoundest concern to Christians at that time, for if not absolutely universal the general belief was that Christian baptism was necessary to salvation. Hence the horrible doctrine, sometimes held as a logical consequence, — of the damnation of unbaptized infants.

In regard to this quarrel about baptism, there are three points in the controversy. First, members of the church in full communion are those who have been baptized and who have been the subjects of regenerating grace, who are conscious that the

Holy Spirit has changed their hearts from darkness to light and from enmity to God to the love of God; these alone are members of the church in full communion. It was universally recognized that members of the church in the highest sense of the term are those who are conscious of spiritual renewal, and who make that confession, with whatever fears and uncertainties, as their veritable state of heart. About this there was no controversy.

The children of such persons were universally regarded as included in the covenant of grace. When the parents, such as I have described, were dismissed, the children were dismissed with them. When parents, such as I have described were admitted into fellowship in a new church by letter, their children were admitted with them; they were children of regenerated parents, and as such were baptized and belonged so far to the church. There was no difficulty about that second position; it was universally admitted.

The trouble came with the third generation. The children of those children, provided they did not go on and experience religion, become converted, conscious subjects of the Holy Spirit, entering into full communion with the church of Christ; provided they did not, but remained simply members of the church by baptism, what is to be done with their children? Are they to be baptized? "No," said the conservatives, with Mr. Davenport at their head. "Yes," said the liberal men; "these children are not pagan children." Here we have on our hands the fight.

In anything that concerns family life, in any serious difference over the children of the church, there is sure to be war. No man is wild enough to go about and say of the babies that they are not good-looking; unless, indeed, he is willing to become one of the most unpopular of men.

Mr. Davenport was called, the minority to the contrary notwithstanding. Their opposition continuing, the First Church at length called a council of the ministers and messengers of four neighboring churches to give advice as to the treatment of its dissenting brethren. They met, reviewed the case piously, deplored the division, but advised that the dissenting brethren be dismissed, that they might found another church.

Thereupon twenty-nine men petitioned the First Church for letters of dismission for themselves and their families, that they might unite in a new church fellowship, according to the advice of the council. A meeting of the First Church was called to consider this request. The first thing done at the meeting, after the reading of the petition, was to exclude the petitioners; they had no business there. Some of their wives remained, hoping to acquaint their good husbands with what took place in the meeting; but they, too, were excluded. After their withdrawal the Church proceeded to renew its call to

Mr. Davenport, and apparently no action was taken at that meeting on the petition of the dissenters.

Their request for dismission was repeated several times, both before and after the installation of Mr. Davenport, but was never granted. At a meeting of the First Church in March, 1669, it was formally denied by vote, and at the same meeting the request of the dissenting brethren for the calling of another council was also refused.

"The dissenting brethren met to seek the Lord to direct and guide them in considering what the Lord called them to do in this their present distress." The only thing possible seemed to be to call a council of several churches for advice. This they did. This second council made three attempts to meet the ministers and brethren of the First Church in conference, but each time their overtures were rejected. They then reviewed the action of the first council, reviewed the case between the First Church and its dissenting brethren, and advised that the latter might use their Christian liberty to unite in another church fellowship, seceding from the membership of the First Church.

The case was next reviewed by the magistrates. Seven of them expressed their approval of the formation of a new church by the dissenters. The Governor and five others expressed disapproval. The Governor, by the way, and two of the five were members of the First Church. The dissenters won again on the third trial by a majority of one.

The matter was next taken up by the General Court at two sessions thereof. Here, at the session of 1671, two years after the formation of the Third Church, the vindication of its friends was complete, a large majority voting that they should be judged innocent and unduly calumniated and misrepresented, although seventeen deputies dissented.

Looking back upon it, we see that the quarrel was a noble one. Both were right, both wrong; each held a half-truth complementary to the half-truth held by the other. The First Church was absolutely right in claiming that the members of the church should be men and women who were conscious disciples of the Lord Jesus and under the power of a great resolve to live in thought, in feeling, in action under the sovereignty of his Presence. No church can last long unless founded upon that. The religious life of the members of the church is fundamental. They must be conscious disciples of Jesus in intellect, in heart, in will, desirous of ever greater submission of their personality to his Divine Presence.

That was a great contention by our mother church, but the next contention, that of the people who formed the Third Church, was equally vital. Christianity is a social affair; it includes the family, society; it is a biological force. There was the great truth to which those men and women bore witness two hundred and fifty years ago. Christianity is a biological force, and children of Christian parents are born hopeful members in the Kingdom of God, and should never be allowed to know themselves as other than disciples of Jesus; dear, accepted sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.

As I read the story I am immensely impressed with the stern character and the independence of the founders of the church. They almost lean backward, they are so independent. They remind me of the two Scottish Highlanders lost in a small boat off the West coast of Scotland. They knew not what to do. One stood at the outlook, and the other resorted to prayer, saying, "O Lord, if you will only lead our little boat out of this fog to the land, we shall be forever beholden unto you." Just then the other cried, "Stop! I see the land. Let us not be beholden to anybody."

Pale and shadowy these men and women appear after two hundred and fifty years; but they were remarkable men and women. The dignity, the patience, the sweetness of the women, their fine self-control, and the heroic courage and rugged integrity of the men impress one greatly.

Thomas Thacher, the first minister of the Third Church, was born in Somersetshire, England, the son of a vicar in the English Church. He was born in 1620, and at the age of fifteen came to this country. It has been interesting to me to note that the first minister of this church was an immigrant, as the sixteenth minister was an immigrant.

I have felt happier, less lonely, since I knew it. Whatever contempt the intervening generations might have for the class to whom I belong, I could shake hands with Thomas Thacher. You have all heard of Thacher's Island, off Cape Ann. That Island was named in recognition of the salvation from disaster of two kinsmen of Thomas Thacher's when the ship on which they sailed was wrecked in a storm off Cape Ann. Thacher's Island should always recall the first minister of the Third Church of Boston. Thomas Thacher served as minister to the church in Weymouth for twenty years; he joined the First Church of Boston in 1667. After the tumult arose, he, like a wise man, asked for a letter of dismission to the church in Charlestown. He was independent of the quarrel, and when the Third Church was organized he was selected to be its first minister and was ordained in February, 1670. He was a physician, as well as a minister. We cannot tell much about his preaching; we know that he was greatly revered. One clear and memorable thing has come down to us, about this first minister of the Old South. He was a man greatly gifted in prayer. The fervor and power of his soul in prayer impressed everybody; he thus poured new life into the little community whose beloved leader he was for eight short years and a half. He died at the early age of fifty-eight. An inventory of his estate was taken and you will be interested to note two items in that inventory;

he left a slave maid and a slave young man — as parts of his estate. What a strange thing it is to us, living today, to think of a minister of Christ owning slaves! What a strangely affecting glimpse that is into a social order that has happily passed away!

Many of you have been in Westminster Abbey; you have spent hours and days in that mausoleum of the great dead of a thousand years of English history; you have wandered about and read the inscriptions, one after the other; you have said that without knowledge, without sympathy, without historical imagination those inscriptions are as blank and dumb as the hieroglyphics written on Egyptian tombs, obelisks and pyramids; that with knowledge, sympathy, historical imagination you can raise the dead through a thousand years, put them in their environments, see them at their separate tasks and all together working, the great generations and the generations of the great in succession, till they have evolved the richness and power and hope of the British empire of today.

The church register of the Old South Church is a mere blank hieroglyph if we come to it without knowledge, without sympathy, without piety, without the gift of historic imagination; but if we come with these faculties the dead live again; we see the Founders at their task, manfully performing it, building for us and for all generations that have intervened between them and us. As we behold them, our minds are filled with admiration and reverence. They builded better than they knew; they founded better than they knew; they so founded that what they founded has existed for two hundred and fifty years. And with similar faith, similar love and similar devotion we can help to make the church they founded two hundred and fifty years ago prophetic of a life in the future for a thousand years.

II. Colonial Leaders

SAMUEL WILLARD, altogether the greatest minister of the church throughout the Colonial period, was born in 1640, graduated from Harvard College in 1659, became minister of the church in 1678, and until his death in 1707, a period of twenty-nine years and five months, was an acknowledged leader throughout New England. In 1701 he became vice-president of Harvard College and served in that office until his death, declining to be made president because he would, in that case, have been obliged to leave his parish and take up his residence in Cambridge. Twenty months before he died he baptized one of the most gifted and famous of American statesmen, Benjamin Franklin. This quivering little mass of flesh hardly a day old was carried across the wintry street on the 6th day of January, 1706, to be baptized by Samuel Willard, the parents evidently thinking that the mid-winter climate here was less to be dreaded than the torrid climate in the other world.

Samuel Willard was preacher, lecturer, administrator, and in every function uncommon; he was leading citizen as well as leading minister. For the last nineteen years of his life he gave a monthly lecture to which not only the thoughtful people about here came, but students of divinity and thoughtful persons from all parts of New England. Twenty years after his death these lectures were published in a volume which it is an athletic feat to lift and carry. For many years this book was one of the chief sources of nourishment for the theological student. I advise you to examine it, and consider the nourishment upon which students and others were fed to support them in their faith in those days.

There are three striking, dramatic incidents in the ministry of Samuel Willard. The first is the reconciliation of the mother church and the Third Church. Again and again the Third Church had taken steps toward a reconciliation with the First or mother church; each advance had been repelled with indignity; I do not think I state it too strongly when I say with insult. Probably a few of the more bitter had died in the thirteen years. At any rate, in 1682, thirteen years after the division, a move was made by the First Church toward a reconciliation. A vote of the First Church was sent by Rev. James Allen, the minister, to the Rev. Samuel Willard. This was entertained most cordially by Mr. Willard, who wrote in return saying that nothing would please him more than to bring about a complete reconciliation of their differences. The note in reply to this from the First Church is a model of penitence and Christian manliness:

Honoured, Worshipfull, Reverend, Beloved in the Lord

We have received your return by the worshipfull Mr. John Hull, esqr., and the reverend Mr. Samuel Willard to our motion to hear, wherein you express your thankful reception and full concurrence with the condition of accommodation therein mentioned, which we declare to be acceptable to us. And, wherein our sinful infirmities have been grievous to you or any of your church, we mutually ask forgiveness of God and you. And desire all offences we judge have been given us, may be forgiven and forgotten, desiring to forgive others even as we believe God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.

And we further entreat that both our motion and your return and this conclusion may be recorded with you, as it shall be with us, in memory of a happy issue of our uncomfortable dispute and the way of our peace.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is most well pleasing in his sight.

So pray,
Honoured, Reverend, Beloved:
your brethren in the faith and
fellowship of the gospel,
JAMES ALLEN,
JOHN WISWALL,
with the full and unanimous consent of the brethren.

Surely this is beautiful. It is good to fight when you have a good cause and good to win; it is sore to be defeated when you have a bad cause; but better still, when the fight is over, for both sides to get together as brethren. Think what an exhibition of this we have had in our own country. When I came to this country in 1871 the gulf between the North and the South was deep and almost impassable. The gulf has not only been bridged, it has been drained and filled up. There is something to be said for the position of the Southern lady, by whose side one of our historians sat at dinner recently and who when asked if she were interested in history, replied, "No, I want to let bygones be bygones!"

The second dramatic incident in the life of the Third Church refers to the coming of Governor Andros from England with a warrant to secure equal ecclesiastical rights for Episcopalians in the town of Boston. That sounds fair until you recall the fact that there were no equal rights in England for anybody but Episcopalians; that the two ablest Puritan ministers, John Howe and Richard Baxter, were sacrificed because they were apostles of Jesus and freedom. Andros called together the ministers of the town of Boston and told them that they must build a chapel for the Anglicans. A modest request, surely. You note the faces of the ministers with a considerable frown on them. The second request was still more interesting: "You must pay the salary of the minister of the Anglican chapel." The frown deepens. The third request was still more appalling: it was not a request, it was an ultimatum. The Governor requisitions the meetinghouse of the Old South for the Anglicans till such time as they shall have a chapel of their own; the meetings must be held at a time to suit him, and the ministers of the church under requisition must arrange their devotions in the odd hours of the day. Mr. Willard and his men protested at each step, in the most vigorous and manly fashion. They told the Governor that their meetinghouse was their own property. The Governor told them in reply that he owned the patents of the Colony and vacated them all by a word, and that all the meetinghouses in the Colony belonged to him.

Three years of this sort of thing stirred the free men of Boston. They appointed a committee of public safety, and arrested the Governor and some of his men and threw them into jail. For this they undoubtedly would have suffered capital punishment had not a revolution occurred, had not James II fled to France, had not William and Mary ascended the throne in his stead. This committee of public safety took Governor Andros, put him on board a ship, and sent him home as an undesirable citizen. A cleaner, finer, manlier deed has never been done in the history of Boston than that; and Samuel Willard and his men were in it for all they were worth. Examples they are of the kind of men who cared for the Old South Church in that day.

The third dramatic incident refers to a sea fight. A piratical vessel under command of one Captain Pounds raided the vessels on our coast and temporarily destroyed the commerce of the town of Boston. Captain Pease with his Lieutenant, members of Mr. Willard's congregation, got together a crew, armed a sloop and set forth to find the robber. They found the vessel in Vineyard Sound. After a bloody fight, they captured the vessel and returned with their prize; and all the ways of the sea leading into Boston were made safe and calm. Captain Pease lost his life in the fight. Tender and impressive must have been the service in the Old South Church the following Sunday when a collection was taken in aid of the widow and four fatherless children of the heroic man, and also for the families of the other men who had lost their lives in maintaining the freedom of the sea.

Samuel Willard was an uncommon man; he was great as a teacher, administrator and as an influence; he was perhaps the strongest intellectual and moral force in the New England of his time. There is a good story that shows that Mr. Willard had a happy sense of humor. He had a son-in-law who was a minister; an excellent writer, but, it would seem, not a very good speaker. Mr. Willard exchanged pulpits with him one morning. The outcry against the sermon of the son-in-law was fierce. It was the poorest sermon they had heard time out of mind; they begged him never to exchange with that man again, even if he was his son-in-law. Mr. Willard, like a wise man, took his discipline in patience and calmness. Two years passed; he borrowed of his son-in-law that same sermon and preached it to that same congregation, who, like many another congregation since his day, had forgotten all about the sermon. The chorus of praise was tremendous. Mr. Willard had never exceeded that effort; they begged a copy of the sermon to print for public circulation. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

The most famous layman of this period, and a great leader, was Judge Sewall. He, like so many of the early men, was an immigrant. The Judge was born at Horton, England, in 1652; he came to this country with his parents in 1661; they settled at Newbury. He was graduated from Harvard College in 1671 and united with the Old South Church in 1677 at the age of twenty-five. He married a daughter of a founder of the church, John Hull, and came into possession of a very considerable fortune. He became Magistrate in 1684; Councillor 1692; Judge of Superior Court in 1692; the last ten years of his judgeship he was Chief Justice. In addition he was a judge of probate and had access to the wills of his friends, which also became an item in his after experience.

His first wife and he lived together nearly forty-two years. They had fourteen children. The second wife lived only seven months; the third wife was a Newton lady. The Judge was good-looking; he was a social force in the new community; he was welcomed everywhere and went everywhere, was a good talker and he had a good memory. He was the first to protest against African slavery; he wrote a noble pamphlet on the selling of Joseph by his brethren; he was one of the first voices in what became one of the noblest symphonies in our whole history. Samuel Sewall was a compound, a mixture of goodness and gossip; of justice and utter triviality, of straightforward living and skilful economic diplomacy. He was a great influence, a good influence, but a mixed influence. He is best known to you through his connection with the witchcraft craze. Here, however, only thirty-two people lost their lives in that panic and craze, whereas in Great Britain thirty thousand died, in France seventy-five thousand, in Germany one hundred thousand, and a proportionate number in Switzerland, Sweden, Italy, and Spain. I repeat that New England had a loss of only thirty-two lives; and yet every scribbler on freedom refers to the horrible persecution and the miscarriage of justice here, and says nothing about what happened in the rest of the world. Judge Sewall, you recall, after condemning these poor deluded souls to be hanged, repented and wrote a confession of his guilt and a prayer for forgiveness, to be read before his fellow-Christians. He stood with bowed head in the Meetinghouse while the confession was being read. The Chief Justice took a different view. He said, "When I condemned those people I believed that I was doing right, and a judge must always do what he considers right at the time." Here you have both sides.

Two men fittingly bring us to the close of the Colonial period, Dr. Joseph Sewall and Thomas Prince. Joseph Sewall was the fourth minister of the Church. He was graduated from Harvard College in the class of 1707, at the age of nineteen; he became colleague to Mr. Pemberton, an excellent scholar and an eloquent preacher, in 1713, and was for seventeen years his father's minister. One can imagine how deep a joy it was to the old Judge to sit for seventeen years under the preaching of his beloved son. Mr. Sewall received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Glasgow University. He contributed a fund to that University, after he received his degree, not before, in the interest of poor students; the Old South Church through that minister is connected with Glasgow University and the education in all these generations of worthy, poor students. Dr. Sewall was chosen President of Harvard College; he declined in the interest of his own church. He was in no way a great man, but he was good-looking, he was worthy, he was benevolent in feeling and in action, he was serene in spirit, and for nearly fifty-six years he was the minister of the Old South Church. He holds the record for length of service, and I think is likely to hold it for many years to come. We have many church records in his handwriting; they are models of neatness and accuracy; the character of the man is in his penmanship. His colleague, Thomas Prince, was born a year earlier but graduated in the same class.

They were classmates, and became colleagues in 1718, and for forty years they toiled together side by side. They differed in opinion often, but always with good will. Each kept a journal and both journals reveal nothing but noble men, devoted friends. It was a romance, that co-pastorship; their friendship was like that of David and Jonathan. Prince was a much travelled man for his time, saw many places, many cities, many famous men. He was a great collector of books and manuscripts; where he got them I do not know, and he has not told whether they were borrowed and never returned, or bought! If he bought them all he must have been a wealthy man. His library was rich in books and manuscripts. It was stored in the tower of the Old South Meetinghouse, on the corner of Washington and Milk streets. It was raided by the British in the Revolution and many of its most valuable possessions were carried to England. There is little doubt that some of these manuscripts are now hidden in London libraries. What was left was collected and finally placed for safekeeping in our Boston Public Library. The ministers and the deacons of the Old South Church are the trustees for all time of that library. It is owned by the Old South Church, not by the Boston Public Library; any time, by the payment of twenty-five hundred dollars, the Prince Library can be reclaimed. The history of New England could not be written without that library; it is precious beyond words. It is the best monument to the far-sighted humanity of Thomas Prince. He was a pioneer among historians, and a man with the instincts of a scholar. He died at the age of seventy-one after having served this church forty full years, the holder of the second record in length of service.

You recall the incident wrought into power and fire by Longfellow when the French fleet had set out to destroy Boston. If you think the incident overdrawn, remember that a President of Yale University said that the event was one of the profoundest causes for thanksgiving all over New England. Those men believed that God intervened to care for a civil community, founded in freedom and devoted to the kingdom of God. Shallow is the faith that does not include belief in the Almighty's interest and defence of the supreme causes of humanity. Here is the incident, and the prayer of Mr. Prince according to the poet:

A fleet with flags arrayed
Sailed from the port of Brest,
And the Admiral's ship displayed
The signal: "Steer southwest."
For this Admiral D'Anville
Had sworn by cross and crown
To ravage with fire and steel
Our helpless Boston Town.

There were rumors in the street,
In the houses there was fear
Of the coming of the fleet,
And the danger hovering near.
And while from mouth to mouth
Spread the tidings of dismay,
I stood in the Old South,
Saying humbly: "Let us pray!

"O Lord! we would not advise;
But if in thy Providence
A tempest should arise
To drive the French Fleet hence,
And scatter it far and wide,
Or sink it in the sea,
We should be satisfied,
And thine the glory be."

This was the prayer I made,
For my soul was all on flame,
And even as I prayed
The answering tempest came;

It came with a mighty power,
Shaking the windows and walls,
And tolling the bell in the tower,
As it tolls at funerals.

The lightning suddenly
Unsheathed its flaming sword
And I cried: "Stand still, and see
The salvation of the Lord!"
The heavens were black with cloud,
The sea was white with hail,
And evermore fierce and loud
Blew the October gale.

The fleet it overtook,
And the broad sails in the van
Like the tents of Cushan shook,
Or the curtains of Midian.
Down on the reeling decks
Crashed the o'erwhelming seas;
Ah, never were there wrecks
So pitiful as these!

Like a potter's vessel broke
The great ships of the line;
They were carried away as a smoke,
Or sank like lead in the brine.
O Lord! before thy path
They vanished and ceased to be,
When thou didst walk in wrath
With thine horses through the sea!

III. THE CHURCH IN THE REVOLUTION

WE come now to the most dramatic and the most famous part of the history of the Old South Church, the part that it played in the American Revolution. As we begin the thrilling narrative, so well known to most of you, we must remark that at this period the leadership passed from the minister of the church to the laymen of the church and congregation. Hitherto it had been otherwise. There was no layman in the town of Boston at all equal in power or in influence to Samuel Willard during his twenty-nine years of service in this church. Ebenezer Pemberton, Joseph Sewall, Thomas Prince were all genuine leaders; Judge Sewall was a subordinate person in comparison with the ministers of the church; the period on which we are now entering in the history of our church finds the reverse to be the case.

Mr. Cumming, who died before the forces of the Revolution were in full command, served the church only about two years; he was a man of ability of his own kind but he left no impression upon the general community. Mr. Blair and Mr. Bacon served the church briefly, Mr. Blair for nearly three and Mr. Bacon a little over four years; and although men of ability and high character they did not read the signs of the times, and left no impression upon the Old South Church or the town of Boston. Mr. Hunt served the church from 1771 until his death in 1775; he was greatly beloved by the people and sincerely mourned when he died; his ministry of high spirituality was often afterward recalled, but he was too frail in body and altogether unfitted for commanding leadership in the stormy time which had now arrived.

The laymen were the leaders, and chief of these was Samuel Adams. His father and mother were members of the Old South Church. His grandfather and grandmother had been members and he himself became a member in 1789 and was in full communion with the church for the last fourteen years of his life. He was born in Boston in 1722, just one hundred years before the birth of General Grant. He was graduated from Harvard in 1740, at the age of eighteen. It is sometimes said that he began the study of law to please his father and that he left it to please his mother. He entered one business enterprise after another and failed in them all. He took to politics and was at once an immense success. He was a representative at the General Court and became Clerk of the House. During his service here his work was of an extraordinary value, his correspondence with prominent persons in all parts of the Colony being voluminous and of vital importance.

Adams repudiated the idea advanced by Franklin and others of a representation in the British Parliament of the American Colonies. He was the author of the idea of the Continental Congress and was a representative in that Congress from 1774 to 1781; he was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. He won over many influential men to the American cause: John Hancock, the wealthy Boston merchant, Dr. Joseph Warren, one of the most upright and influential men of the time, Josiah Quincy, and many other valiant souls were won to the cause through the insight and the inspiring personal leadership of Samuel Adams.

Adams was not great as a speaker, nor as a constructive statesman; in calling out and organizing the latent forces of the revolution he was matchless. Later in life he was Lieutenant Governor, and still later for several years he was Governor of the Commonwealth. He died at the age of eighty-one, in 1803.

Passing to the church, let us see what part the church played in these tumultuous years. In the first place, on June 10, 1768, an English frigate arrived to enforce the new revenue laws, and seized a vessel belonging to John Hancock. The free men of Boston felt that it was an outrage that a vessel belonging to a citizen of Boston should be seized by a frigate from England. The selectmen of the town called a meeting in Faneuil Hall; Faneuil Hall was not big enough to hold the crowd and the Old South Meetinghouse was thrown open and packed to overflowing.

A committee was chosen, to protest against the outrage to Governor Bernard, and to obtain from him an honorable settlement. The case was settled, patched up, after a while; the Governor was concessive and the patriots were conservative. That was their strength. They considered every step that they took. The settlement was fairly satisfactory on both sides, good enough for a beginning.

In 1770 the King street massacre occurred. For seventeen months two regiments had been quartered in the town of Boston, to the disgust of the free men. More and more strained became the relations of the citizens and the soldiers; more frequently insulting words passed between them, till one day on King street, the people being especially aggressive, the soldiers shot down six of them. Next day, in the afternoon, the Old South Church was opened again and a crowd of 2000 men gathered, with Samuel Adams as their leader. He was sent to the Governor to ask that these regiments be removed from the town and quartered in Castle William. The Governor again was concessive, being anxious to avoid trouble; this time the patriots were not so conservative. The Governor consented to the removal of one regiment. Samuel Adams went to the Old South Meetinghouse and reported the Governor's message, saying as he delivered the report, "The removal of two or none!" Whereupon the unanimous vote was, "Both or none!"

Mr. Adams returned to the Governor and reported the vote. The Governor surrendered and these two regiments were sent to be quartered henceforth in Castle William. They were afterward known in Parliament by the name of "Sam Adams's regiments"; because wherever he wanted them to go, they went. Thereafter on each successive anniversary of the King street massacre a public commemoration was held in the Old South Meetinghouse and a noted patriotic speaker was chosen to express the thoughts and feelings of the free men of Boston.

In 1772 Dr. Joseph Warren delivered an oration which stirred the town to its depths, giving an able account in constitutional law of the relations that existed between the Colonies and Great Britain and preaching with great eloquence his ideas of freedom. Dr. Joseph Warren appeared as an orator three years later, coming in at one of the windows of the church, part of his audience being composed of the British troops and part of Boston patriots.

The next series of meetings held in the Old South Meetinghouse by the patriots was in connection with the famous Tea Party. You will remember that the first ship, *Dartmouth*, arrived at Boston and anchored below the custom house November 28, 1773. She was not allowed to land the tea consigned to this port by the East India Company, because the port was to be taxed when the tea was landed.

The meetings began in the Old South Church on this date, the 28th of November, and they were continued (and no one complained of the length of time spent in the church) till the 16th of December, the same year. The *Dartmouth* was joined by the *Eleanor* and the *Beaver*, and these three vessels, anchored near Griffin's Wharf, awaited their fate.

At the meetings held in the church three votes were passed unanimously: first, that the tea be sent back whence it came; second, that it be sent back with the tax unpaid; third, that it be sent back in the vessels that brought it. The best description of this Tea Party extant is found in Carlyle's *Frederick the Great.* Dr. Manning in his essay on Samuel Adams quotes a part of it; I think you will like to read the whole account:[1]

"The Boston Tea (same day). Curious to remark, while Frederick is writing this letter 'Thursday, December 16th, 1773,' what a commotion is going on, far over seas, at Boston, New England, in the 'Old South Meetinghouse,' there in regard to three English Tea-Ships that are lying embargoed in Griffin's Wharf, for above a fortnight past. (The case is well known and still memorable to mankind.)

"This Thursday, accordingly by 10 in the morning, in the 'Old South Meetinghouse,' Boston is assembled and country people to the number of 2,000; — and Rotch never was in such a company of human Friends before. They are not uncivil to him (cautious people, heedful of the verge of the Law); but they are peremptory, to the extent of —

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[1] Frederick the Great, Book XXI, Chapter V.

Rotch may shudder to think what. 'I went to the custom house yesterday,' said Rotch, 'your Committee of Ten can bear me witness; and demanded clearance and leave to depart; but they would not; were forbidden, they said!' 'Go then, sir; get you to the Governor himself; a clearance, and out of harbour this day: hadn't you better?' Rotch is well aware that he had; hastens off to the Governor (who has vanished to his country-house, on purpose); Old South Meetinghouse adjourning until 3 P.M., for Rotch's return with clearance.

"At 3 o'clock no Rotch, nor at 4, nor at 5; miscellaneous plangent intermittent speech instead, mostly plangent, in tone sorrowful rather than indignant: — at a quarter to 6, here at length is Rotch; sun is long since set. — Has Rotch a clearance or not? Rotch reports at large, willing to be questioned and cross-questioned: 'Governor absolutely would not! My Christian friends, what could I or can I do?' There are by this time about 7000 people in (about) Old South Meetinghouse, very few tallow-lights in comparison, almost no lights for the mind, either, and it is difficult to answer. Rotch's report done, the Chairman (one Adams, 'American Cato,' subsequently so called) dissolves the sorrowful 7000 with these words: 'This meeting declares that it can do nothing more to save the country.' Will merely go home, then, and weep. Hark, however: almost on the instant, in front of Old South Meetinghouse a terrific War whoop and about fifty Mohawk Indians, — with whom Adams seems to be acquainted; and speaks without Interpreter: Aha! —

"And, sure enough, before the stroke of 7, these fifty painted Mohawks are forward, without noise, to Griffin's Wharf have put sentries all round there; and, in a great silence of the neighborhood, are busy, in three gangs, upon the dormant Tea-ships; opening their chests, and punctually shaking them out into the sea. 'Listening from the distance, you could hear distinctly the ripping open of the chests and no other sound.' About 10 P.M., all was finished; 342 chests of tea flung out to infuse in the Atlantic; the fifty Mohawks gone like a dream; and Boston sleeping more silently even than usual." The old South Meetinghouse then enacted history of world-wide significance.

The next revolutionary event in which the church is connected is less widely known. General Gage, as you know, sent an expedition to Lexington in 1775, April, to capture Samuel Adams and John Hancock, who were temporarily staying there; all other offenders were to be forgiven; these two were to be executed for high treason. Of the famous ride of Paul Revere we all know, but the part played by a member of the Old South Church, equally important, is not so well known.

There were two messengers despatched that night to alarm the countryside and especially to warn those two great leaders to withdraw. Paul

Revere went by sea; the sea course was much shorter and he got to Lexington first and actually warned the patriots. William Dawes, member of the Old South Church, was the other rider and he took the land course, with great difficulty eluding the British guard at the Neck; he crossed the Charles river at the Brighton bridge, proceeded through Cambridge and got to Lexington only a little later than Paul Revere.

These two men were riding together, having done part of their work, when they came upon a delightful young patriot of the time, Dr. Prescott, who was returning from a visit to his sweetheart, Miss Mulliken. The three proceeded together till they found themselves in the neighborhood of a company of British officers. Prescott, who was the best mounted of the three, urged his horse and cleared the stone wall and escaped. The British officers at once gave chase to Dawes, who spurred his steed to its best and rode right up toward an empty farm house, slapping his hand on his leathern breeches and shouting, "Hello, boys! I've got two of them!" Whereupon the officers, suspecting a trap, turned their horses and fled! Dawes escaped, losing only his watch; even that was found afterwards. The exploit of William Dawes is just as memorable, just as inspiring as that of Paul Revere, but he still waits for a Longfellow to give lyric expression to the glorious exploit of that evening and the following day. Paul Revere was not so lucky as his two friends. He rode all unconsciously into a British detachment and had to surrender.

In the siege of Boston, from 1775 to 1776 there is no record of any meeting on the part of the Old South Church anywhere. The church was without ministers, the members were dispersed. Practically the church appeared to be extinct. The Meetinghouse was desecrated in a truly infamous way. It must be added, however, that in times of war churches have been taken not infrequently for military uses. Other churches in the town of Boston were so used by the British, they were so taken and used in New York, but upon no church did the British wreak such vengeance as they did upon the Old South Meetinghouse. The pulpit was taken down and cut to pieces; the pews were taken out and burned; the finest pew of all, Deacon Hubbard's pew, was taken and turned into a hog-pen. Hundreds of loads of dirt were carted into the church and spread upon the floor to make the riding safe and easy and the fall without injury, if the rider happened to fall. One part of the gallery was spared for the officers and their lady friends, and a bar was erected, at which liquor was sold to the officers and their friends. Another kind of bar was shot across one of the doors and the soldiers in their exercises cleared the bar, or tried to, and landed inside the church. The regiment that thus desecrated our former Meetinghouse was the 17th Light Horse Dragoons. This was an appalling sight to the good people of Boston; the soldiers carried their sacrilege further. The parsonage, the house in which John Winthrop had lived and died, which Samuel Willard, Ebenezer Pemberton and Dr. Joseph Sewall had occupied, was destroyed. The residence of Samuel Adams was rendered uninhabitable.

Here let me record a few episodes. The first goes back to 1744, when Colonel Pepperrell, nephew by marriage of Joseph Sewall, and Captain Gridley of the Old South Church, headed an expedition against the French in Cape Breton. Under Colonel Pepperrell the great fortress of Louisburg was taken. There are members of this church and congregation today who are descendants of those who went and took part in that great expedition. This episode was significant in the training which it gave to Gridley, who afterward, as a first-class engineer, built the forts on Lake George, who also rendered admirable service at Bunker Hill and at the siege of Boston.

The second episode is of a very different character and concerns one of the most pathetic incidents in our entire history. In 1761 a little slave girl of seven, who was kidnapped from Africa and brought hither, was offered, among other slaves, for sale in the town. Mr. and Mrs. John Wheatley went to look the slaves over, as you might a set of Boston bull terriers, to see if there happened to be any in the number suitable for their service. Mrs. Wheatley was greatly moved by this little African slave girl of seven years of age, and took her home in her carriage. Sensitive, obedient, clinging, loving and lovable, this child gained the confidence of the entire family. One of the Wheatley daughters taught her to read and write. In a few months she made amazing progress. She wrote the most beautiful of all the eulogies that were written of Dr. Joseph Sewall; of all the testimonials to his work, that of Phyllis Wheatley was thought to be the best. She became a member of the Old South Church in 1771, and when Washington took command of the American forces, under the old elm at Cambridge, Phyllis Wheatley wrote a poem in his honor and sent him a note. Here is General Washington's acknowledgment; what a superb gentleman he was!

"Miss Phyllis: Your favor of the 26th of October did not reach my hands till the middle of December. Time enough, you will say, to have given an answer ere this. Granted. But a variety of important occurrences, continually interposing to distract the mind and withdraw the attention, I hope will apologize for the delay, and plead my excuse for the seeming, but not real, neglect. I thank you most sincerely for your polite notice of me in the elegant lines you enclosed: and however undeserving I may be of such encomium and panegyric, the style and manner exhibit a striking proof of your poetical talents; in honor of which, as a tribute justly due to you, I would have published the poem had I not been apprehensive that, while I only meant to give the world this new instance of your genius, I might have incurred the imputation of vanity. This, and nothing else, determined me not to give it a place in the public prints.

"If you should ever come to Cambridge, or near headquarters, I shall be happy to see a person so favored by the Muses, to whom nature has been so liberal and beneficent in her dispensations. I am, with great respect, your obedient, humble servant, Geo. Washington."

Here is a sample of Phyllis Wheatley's muse:

'Twas mercy brought me from my pagan land,
Taught my benighted soul to understand
That there's a God — that there's a Saviour too:
Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.
Some view our sable race with scornful eye —
"Their color is a diabolic dye."
Remember, Christians, Negroes black as Cain
May be refined, and join th' angelic train.

I have been deeply interested with the discovery that we have so many descendants in this church today of those who took part in the Revolutionary war. Time would fail me to mention all. Let me take the deacons of the church as a parable, withholding all names. The great grandfather of one deacon, and the grandfather of the present treasurer of the Old South Society, fought in that war and obtained a bounty coat for meritorious service; another deacon is connected by four lines of ancestry with the fighting, and strange enough to say all four lines had representatives in the battle of Ticonderoga; two spent the winter with Washington in Valley Forge and partook of the bounties that were then so abundant! I have been interested to discover it was on the maternal side that the fighting representatives were mostly found. There is only one officer of the church who has not been able to find any of his ancestors who fought in the Revolution; he coupled this confession with the remark that he was very glad because they would have been obliged to fight against the ancestors of his minister, who were on the wrong side!

The blood of the Revolution is in the veins of the Old South Church today. It is a militant church, full of the fire and spirit of '76. To know this I hope is an inspiration to good citizenship and good Christianity.

Here a remark is in order respecting the restoration of the Old South Meetinghouse. For five years, from 1777 to 1782, the Old South congregation met in King's Chapel. Let that always be remembered. King's Chapel took the Old South people in, made room for them when they had no place in which to gather and preserve their ecclesiastical organization. Five years is a long time for one church to entertain another church as its guest. King's Chapel did this and offered to continue it longer if necessary.

After the war Boston was poor; the leading men had lost their wealth, their property had depreciated, they were in great straits; the repair of the Meetinghouse was a great burden, but it was done, and done by the people of the church. They appealed to the town, that the Old South Meetinghouse had so magnificently served, but nobody in the town was able to do anything toward repairing the desecrated church. The will was not wanting, but the power was wanting; every one had enough to do to take care of his own special obligations.

The Meetinghouse was at length repaired and on the Lord's day, March 2, 1783, the church returned to its old ecclesiastical home, repeating doubtless to itself, "The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Here follows the anthem which was sung that day; the music was composed by William Selby, then organist at King's Chapel. How the anthem must have rolled throughout the renovated church, and still more what music it must have made in the happy hearts and greatened minds of those men and women who had survived seven years of Revolutionary war.

Behold, God is my salvation,
I will trust and not be afraid;
For the Lord Jehovah is my strength and song,
He also is become my salvation;

He hath raised up the tabernacle of David that is
fallen;
He hath closed up the breaches thereof,
He hath raised up the ruins,
He hath built it as in the days of old
And caused his people to rejoice therein.
Praise the Lord, call upon his name,
Declare his doings among the nations,
Make mention that his name is exalted,
Sing unto the Lord for he hath done excellent things;
This is known in all the earth.
Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion,
For great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.
Hallelujah! for the Lord Omnipotent reigneth!

IV. The Church and the Civil War

WE are still near the period of the Civil War, and the imagination of every patriotic man is touched by a thousand appeals. Decoration Day, with its thinned ranks of worn veterans, appeals to thought and feeling vividly and deeply. In every graveyard, in every hamlet throughout New England, throughout the whole loyal North, one will find the Stars and Stripes planted by a solitary, humble grave, here, there and yonder. Every village has it soldiers' monument, telling what the struggle meant, not only to the great cities, but to every centre of population in the North. One of the most affecting of these symbols is the corridor of Memorial Hall, Cambridge. Pass through that corridor and read the names on those white tablets and realize what the Civil War meant in the sacrifice of the best and bravest of that generation.

This mode of approach deepens feeling, quickens thought and gives a more comprehensive sense of that burden of strife, alternate hope and despair which lay for four years upon the soul of a great people. The Civil War I regard as one of the greatest wars in all history. It was fought on moral grounds and for moral causes, and its triumph is an immense help to faith in the moral government of the world. Carlyle used to say that the French Revolution saved him from atheism to faith in a moral Deity, because there and then a century of lust and shame, robbery and contempt, lying and cruelty, burned itself out under the government of the just God.

The period to which we come in the history of our church is a period of division and searching of heart. Boston was divided between proslavery and antislavery. Phillips Brooks once told me that in the late forties, when the waves of opinion were running wild and high as if before hurricanes, he and his playmates used to crowd into the Boston Theatre in order to hiss the abolitionists. He said, "We did not know anything about the reason of our hissing, but enjoyed it. The police would apprehend us and box our ears and throw us into the street; we waited for another chance to go in with a fresh crowd and hiss the abolitionists again!" Here is a sign of the tumult and confusion of opinion.

This condition of things in the city reflected itself in the Old South congregation; proslavery and antislavery sat side by side; one man praising his minister when there was mention made of a black man in the sermon, and another saying, "Too much nigger in that discourse." This division of opinion in the city and in the church was reflected in the ministry.

Dr. Blagden was from the South, he was proslavery; the institution seemed to him of divine origin, the Bible was in its favor. It was good for the black man to be in bondage and good for the white man to have him there. The institution of slavery was good! His junior colleague, Dr. Manning, coming from New England, with a richer humanity, with a sense of the cruelty of barter and exchange in flesh and blood and the reduction of human life to the level of a chattel, was an antislavery man in every fibre of his being. These two men differed on the temperance question. Dr. Blagden said, "I am in favor of temperance, but what is temperance? It is the moderate or rational use of alcohol." "Every creature of God is good," was one of his favorite texts, and "Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine infirmities." His colleague, looking upon the havoc wrought by the use of alcohol, especially among the poor, could think of temperance only under the form of total abstinence.

Here then were the divisions. It was as if an earthquake had gone before them, and men were walking and jumping across yawning chasms. They were high-minded men, and no two men then alive could have been brought together who were nobler in their purpose and spirit than Dr. Blagden and Dr. Manning. It is easy enough to be united when there are no great issues burning in the hearts of of the people, and setting children against their parents and parents against their children. It takes men of a different stamp to work together with high composure when the community and the church and their own minds are rent with vast antagonisms!

Fort Sumter was fired upon and compelled to surrender on the 12th of April, 1861. What took place? The two ministers stood on one platform, as Dr. Blagden said, absolutely one. The whole church stood together as one; all Boston was one man when the Flag had been fired upon. The first great scene in the Old South Church at this period was on the first of May, 1861, nineteen days after the government fort in the harbor of South Carolina had been taken by Confederate forces. As in Revolutionary days, so now, the patriots of Boston turned toward the Old South Meetinghouse. The standing committee erected a platform under the tower for the use of speakers and a vast concourse of people surrounded the church. The chairman of the standing committee, Mr. George Homer, presided. The United States flag was flung to the breeze from the tower of the church, amid the profoundest enthusiasm and emotion. Here are a few sentences from the remarks of Mr. Homer; his words show the feeling of the laymen of the day.

"In the dark and stormy times of our Revolutionary history," Mr. Homer said, "it was within the consecrated walls of the Old South Church that our patriotic fathers were accustomed to assemble and take counsel together. Here Warren and Hancock and the Adamses and their associates met and poured out their protest against British oppression; here within a few feet of where we stand Benjamin Franklin was born. Let us then, in view of the memories of the past and in hope and faith of the future and above all relying on the favour of heaven, reverently throw our national flag to the breeze and invoke upon it the blessing of Almighty God." Imagine the scene! Mr. Homer then called upon the assembly to join with Dr. Blagden in prayer. I quote a few sentences from that prayer:

"Bless thy servant, the President of our Union, and those immediately connected with him in the administration of our government. Be with them in those solemn moments, when the lives and the happiness of multitudes may hang on their decisions. Render them firm and energetic in action. . . . Oh, Lord, if this question must be settled by the shedding of blood, go with our hosts in action. Yet, if it be thy will, so guide the minds of our erring countrymen, that this issue may be avoided. But if thou hast otherwise determined, grant that we, who sustain the government and the laws of the country, may be united, and be blessed, and be made successful by thee."

Then came an address by Dr. Manning, the junior minister of the church. I quote a few sentences from this truly eloquent and thrilling address. The speaker was young, and youth is always prophetic; the new generation was speaking through him as it could not in the older man.

"God's temple welcomes the star-spangled banner today, — for that banner has ceased to be the sign of corrupt fellowship, or of subserviency to wrong, and has become the symbol of justice and loyalty to human rights. There floats the ensign of the free. We hail it with patriotic shouts, for it signals to us divine order and the brotherhood of men. Those stripes of crimson and pearl, and that constellation on its field of blue, are thrilling twenty millions of hearts while I speak. From the valleys of the Pine-tree State, from the homes of Stark and Allen, Putnam and Greene, from the mighty empires of the Middle States, from boundless prairie and forest and mine they issue forth together with you of this free commonwealth, an innumerable and invincible host to bear our national emblem whither duty shall lead the way. All that beautifies and blesses American society asks to sit in the shadow of the dear old flag; only that which is hateful and destructive would drag it from the sky and rend and trample it."

The apostrophe to the flag follows:

"We welcome thee today to thy natal spot, to the Puritan Church of which thou wert born. Flag of the free, float on forever in majesty and might, thou glorious ensign, symbol of liberty, guardian of order and law and a nation's pride, thou joy-speaking herald to the oppressed of all lands! Within thy folds may no crime or dishonor lurk; palsied be the tongue that would defame thee and withered the hand that would tear thee from that lofty height. God go with thee in the day of battle and victory; make thy standard her abiding place."

Dr. Manning's remarks were frequently interrupted by hearty applause and nine cheers were given for the speaker when he had concluded. Dr. Blagden rose and declared his stand, with absolute candor and impressive power:

"We are here as one man today; what is more, we are united in eternal truth. For we meet to sustain just government. The powers that be are ordained of God. The magistrate beareth not the sword in vain. This truth is mighty and will prevail. The flag we have raised is an emblem of it and of a free government from which men cannot secede but by rebellion, and where is the foe but falls before us with freedom's soil beneath our feet and freedom's banner streaming o'er us!" Nine cheers were given for Dr. Blagden.

The next scene of interest in the Old South Meetinghouse in this period was the turning of the church into a recruiting depot. During 1862 calamity after calamity came to the Union arms; for the first time the magnitude of the struggle began to get into the minds and imaginations of the North. Abraham Lincoln had called for 300,000 men to fight three years; he had issued another call for 300,000 men to enlist for nine months; to further this second movement the Standing Committee threw open the Old South Meetinghouse. Bands played, speeches were made, prayers were offered, and in the yard of the Old South Meetinghouse the 43d Massachusetts regiment was largely recruited. This regiment requested the Rev. J. M. Manning to go with them to the front as chaplain. Permission was given by the church and the society for him to go. He received his commission from Governor Andrew, and leaving a wife and four young children behind, in his thirty-eighth year, went out with his men to the front.

About this time others went from the church. I have not been able to find a full list. There must have been more than I can name. Edward C. Johnson, treasurer of the Old South Society, went as first lieutenant of the 44th Massachusetts, promoted to adjutant in the following May; George Blagden, oldest son of the senior minister and

Edward Bladgen, another son, served in the 45th; Thomas Blagden went into the Navy — three of the senior minister's sons entered the great struggle. Joseph Henry Thayer, an Old South boy, left his parish in Salem, and went as a chaplain to the front. Later members who went to the front were William E. Murdock, serving from the beginning to the end of the great struggle; Alpheus H. Hardy, first lieutenant in the 45th; Albert H. Spencer, and Colonel Bradley, one of the youngest men to enter the Army. He entered at the age of thirteen, served through to the end, and when the war was over he was only about seventeen years of age.

When the 43d regiment was recruited, the junior minister of the church preached a sermon to the officers of the regiment. The church was crowded, as usual, and certain words to those who stayed at home are I think particularly impressive now.

"Is it too much," he says, "for me to ask that the interest of this religious society may follow the regiment with which I go, that I may be able ever, should they be in need, to point out to them the substantial tokens of your affection and that the moral and religious counsel which I shall endeavor to give may be reinforced by an argument without which words are of little avail. Though few or none of them may be without ample resources of their own today, we cannot tell to what suffering they may be reduced by the chances of war, and I here commend unto you and pray you to remember the sacredness of your obligation as to the defenders of your firesides, and ask you not only to carry them daily in the arms of your faith, but to follow them with all those other attentions which shall help to preserve and ennoble their manhood."

You are aware that Dr. Manning contracted a fever in the service of his regiment and of his country. He returned and was long a sufferer; so low did he sink that his death was reported in the papers. Slowly he came back to life and vigor and for many years thereafter served this church, but always with the germs of disease working in his body. Dr. Manning died from the effects of the War as surely as if a bullet had pierced his heart on the field. His death took place November 29, 1882.

There are many tender thoughts connected with that time. A severe engagement had been fought in which the 44th regiment had borne its part, and the 45th; at the close of the day, in the dark, the chaplain makes his way over long distances and rough ways to inquire if the boys of his parish are among the living or among the dead. The significance of this story is here: these young men and their young minister took the church and put it in the heart of the great struggle; the church shed its blood with the rest of the country.

The next scene is one of transcendent interest. All day on Sunday, from early morning to late at night, on the 9th of April, the news had been pouring in, and bulletins were posted on the Merchant's

Exchange building that General Lee had surrendered to General Grant, and that the war was over. You can imagine the crowds that stood in front of those bulletins; you can imagine the shouts of joy and the doxologies they sung, the frantic expressions of emotion as they realized that the war was over, that the country was once more united.

On the following day the citizens of Boston asked for the Old South Meetinghouse as a place of thanksgiving. The crowd filled the building to its utmost capacity and surged round it, a sea of joy. Prayers were offered, speeches made and psalms sung; the church again was the mouthpiece and the symbol of the joy of the city and of the nation.

One week later the terrible reverse came. Over the wires on Saturday the dreadful message ran that President Lincoln had died that morning. On Sunday, April 16, with the pulpit draped in black, to an awe-stricken and broken-hearted church and congregation, the junior minister preached his sermon on the death of the great leader. Curiously enough I came into possession of a book bearing on this Sunday long before I knew anything about the Old South Church, a book in which are gathered the sermons of all the prominent preachers of that date. Here are the names of the men who preached in Boston on that memorable and tremendous Sunday:

Dr. Kirk, Dr. Bartol, Dr. Manning, Dr. Todd, Dr. Clarke, G. H. Hepworth, W. R. Nicholson, Mr. Hague, Dr. Webb, Dr. Neal, Rev. Henry Wilder

Foote of King's Chapel, F. D. Huntington, W. H. Cudworth, C. Robbins, W. S. Studley, R. Ellis, S. K. Lothrop, Edward Everett Hale, A. A. Miner, James Reed, George Putnam, G. L. Chaney, A. L. Stone, J. D. Fulton; only one surviving, Rev. James Reed, the venerable and beloved Swedenborgian minister.

That day of tumult, of heart-searching, of tragic grief, crowded all the churches; all the ministers spoke on one thing, all cried out to God for faith and hope. What a day! Dr. Manning's text and the opening words of his sermon follow:

"And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord."

"'According to the word of the Lord.' Sweet announcement to a broken-hearted nation, today! 'Abraham Lincoln died this morning, twenty-two minutes after seven o'clock.' That was the message which the wires, heavy laden with their tidings, sobbed forth yesterday in all our pleasant places. And we awoke from our troubled sleep this morning, and lo! it was not a dream. 'According to the word of the Lord.' 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' We look above all human agency. We recognize the will that never errs, nor falters, and that worketh all things, in heaven and on earth after his own perfect counsel.

"'So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there.' He had brought us through the 'great and terrible wilderness,' unto the borders of our goodly heritage; but was himself forbidden to enter. How incomplete, how complete the dear life that has passed on!"

As I have read the records of this time, I must confess that I have been deeply moved. Every word, every utterance, every token of life is charged with profoundest feeling. The great heart of the North was stirred, stirred morally, stirred religiously and moved toward God with unwonted power:

Bow down, dear Land, for thou hast found release!
Thy God, in these distempered days,
Hath taught thee the sure wisdom of His ways,
And through thine enemies hath wrought thy peace!
Bow down in prayer and praise!
No poorest in thy borders but may now
Lift to the juster skies a man's enfranchised brow.
O Beautiful! my Country! ours once more!
Smoothing thy gold of war-dishevelled hair
O'er such sweet brows as never other wore,
And letting thy set lips,
Freed from wrath's pale eclipse,
The rosy edges of their smile lay bare,
What words divine of lover or of poet
Could tell our love and make thee know it,
Among the Nations bright beyond compare?

What were our lives without thee?
What all our lives to save thee?
We reck not what we gave thee;
We will not dare to doubt thee,
But ask whatever else, and we will dare!

V. Later History

IN the late sixties of the last century it became clear to many among the leaders of the Old South Church that the Meetinghouse on Milk and Washington streets could no longer adequately serve the needs of a living, growing spiritual society. Unanimity, however, did not exist either among the members of the church or of the corporation. There were remonstrants against the attempt to move, and to erect another house of worship. These remonstrants were of three classes. There were the members of the church and the society who were deeply attached to the venerable and famous Meetinghouse; in this they were fully justified. These persons loved this building more than the church, the fellowship of like-minded men and women in the service of the community; in this they were not justified. The majority loved the Meetinghouse no less sincerely than the minority, but they loved the church more than they loved the building.

A second class of remonstrants consisted of the ministers of Boston, — a group of them would perhaps be a more accurate description. These men were friendly to the minority of the Old South people, unfriendly to the majority. They made a good deal of trouble for the majority leaders, but they did not count for much in the trial of strength.

The third remonstrant was formidable, the public opinion against the right to move, created by a considerable number of prominent and influential citizens. To them the Meetinghouse was a monumental building; here they were clearly in the right. To them the church as a spiritual fellowship in the service of the city counted for little; here they were mistaken.

The case was carried before the Legislature; it was heard before a single judge of the Supreme Court, and later before the full bench. In every trial of justice the Old South Society won; the litigation was long and costly, but the triumph for the society was complete.

Dr. Manning, sole minister of the church from 1872, when Dr. Blagden resigned, till 1882, was pained by the division of opinion in the society; he was pained by the absence of sympathy with the purpose of the church on the part of many of his brother ministers; beyond all he was pained by the alienation from his ministry of a large body of his fellow-citizens who had admired and supported him in his early ministry. He bore all this bravely, and before he died he was made supremely happy by seeing the church rescued from imminent death, refounded, and in sure possession of an indefinitely extended future of influence.

There was one layman who appeared absolutely indispensable to the life of the church in this crisis, Samuel Johnson, Chairman of the Standing Committee. Other notable laymen stood round him. Avery Plumer, fearless fighter for his convictions; Moses Merrill, wise, calm, steadfast; Alpheus Hardy, princely Boston merchant and influential citizen; Loring Lothrop and Frederick D. Allen, faithful and true; Samuel Hurd Walley, friend of Daniel Webster, clear in mind and weighty in judgment, later chairman of the committee that superintended the erection of our present House of Worship, whose personal and inherited love for the Old South made his laborious service a work of piety and delight; Deacon Charles A. Stoddard, the Old South saint of his time; and John L. Barry, forever loyal and militant. To these names must be added that of Linus M. Child, stout-hearted attorney for the society, and Charles A. Morss, mild in manner, just and resolute in spirit.

Later other men appear in our records: Joseph H. Gray, keen financial servant of the society; Richard Hall Stearns, for many years a deacon and a prominent member; William B. Garritt whose conservative thought was accompanied by the deepest religious feeling; Alphonso S. Covel, one of the friendliest and most useful of men; Luther A. Wright, perhaps the most successful superintendent the Bible School ever had; and the learned historian of the church, Hamilton A. Hill. These men represent a later generation of members and servants of the Old South Church.

In the greatest crisis in its life since it was founded, Samuel Johnson came forward, the indispensable friend of the society. He was then in his magnificent prime. No injustice could ruffle his temper, no opposition break or weaken his purpose. For four long, troubled years he lived mainly to serve this church, to defend its rights, to secure for it the command of its property, to establish it by law in freedom and security. He won his cause; he was, as the representative of the society, triumphant everywhere; above all he so fought as to make no enemy; he so contended as to increase the public esteem in which he was held then and till his death in 1899 among all wise and good men. Since the Founders of the Church there has been, in my judgment, no layman so important at a critical period of our history, or so nobly influential in succeeding years.

The Boston fire, in November 1872, made worship in the old Meetinghouse practically impossible. Then it was, however, that the fight began in earnest. At one meeting of the Society a member rose and said that since the building was spared from the flames that had consumed the whole region round it, clearly it was the will of God that the church should continue to worship there. To this a veteran of the Civil War, then a young man, inquired with consuming logic, How about the saloon at the other end of Milk street? That, too, was spared from the flames. Did Providence intend that both enterprises, the liquor trade and religion, should go on at the old sites? That young man was Edward C. Johnson, for the past twenty years treasurer of the Old South Society.

The Old South Church was granted the right to move; the Old South Meetinghouse was preserved. The noble struggle had thus a wholly happy issue. Nothing remains today but the friendliest feeling in the Old South Church for the men and women who represent those who saved a monumental building, and in the Old South Meetinghouse Association, in which by rare courtesy the present minister of the church is a member, for our fellowship and work. In this spirit we greet each other today.

The Old South Church, in the noble words on the tablet in the front porch, was "preserved and blessed of God for more than two hundred years while worshipping on its original site, corner of Washington and Milk streets, whence it was removed to this building in 1875, amid constant proofs of His guidance and loving favor." The church has survived because its members in each new generation, with clean hands, pure hearts, and wise heads, have loved it, served it, and set its good above and beyond all private interests. No other force than that can save it for the future. "The memory of the just is blessed"; the great company of just souls, men and women who are worthy of remembrance; and the just memory of today by which they are held in everlasting remembrance. The whole great story fills the mind with the high meaning and the solemn beauty of life:

. . . Life is not as idle ore,
But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot in burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd with the shocks of doom
To shape and use.

THE MINISTRY OF GEORGE A. GORDON

THE *paper which follows deals with Dr. Gordon's pastorate at the Old South Church from his installation to the time of the publication of this volume. It was prepared by the Reverend Albert E. Dunning, D.D. — a member of the Church, at the request of the Church Committee.*

THE MINISTRY OF GEORGE A. GORDON

INSTALLED APRIL 2, 1884

HISTORIANS have remarked that the end of a century and the beginning of the next are usually a period of greatest unrest. This is notably true of the last thirty-five years. Every realm of thought and action has expanded through storms — theology, education, politics, industry, arts, inventions.

The local history of the Old South Church during this time of upheaval has been distinguished by two things; by inward harmony and by manifest divine guidance. The faith of its members is inscribed on the outer walls of the new edifice, "Qui transtulit sustinet." As a prophecy it has been wonderfully fulfilled.

The church is rarely fortunate in having one leader during all this period. Through him it has spoken the word of wisdom interpreting the purpose of God in each crisis. His confidence in the ideals and integrity of its members and their unswerving confidence in him have made secure its assurance that through the strife and struggle of men and nations the will of God is being established. The sane optimism of the Old South Church is an unfailing source of its spiritual strength and its material progress.

George Angier Gordon was born and bred in a typical Scottish Christian home, a farmer's son and himself a farmer in his boyhood. The life of his homeland throbs in his veins not less now than fifty years ago. It pulses in his sermons, through which flit pictures of sunsets on Scotland's purple mountains, reflected in her tarns, of flocks quietly feeding in her close cropped pastures. The song of the skylark in the dawn, of the mavis at nightfall, the whistle of the blackbird in his thorny den at noon, and the reaper's song in the field of ripened wheat are undertones in his appeals.

In a spirit of bold adventure, he found his way to this New World when he was eighteen years old, and earned his living as a working man at an iron moulder's bench in South Boston. He found room in his meagre luggage for the hammer he had often thrown successfully in athletic contests.

Fired by a passion to preach the Gospel he left the workshop, made his way through Bangor Theological Seminary and was ordained pastor of a typical New England country church, in Temple, Maine. There he labored for a year with a devotion which after half a century is fragrant in the memories of the children of his people, and in the traditions of the generation following them.

Under the pressure of an ever increasing thirst for knowledge he turned from his ministry for a time and came to Harvard University seeking instruction in Greek Literature and in philosophy. He was allowed to take these two subjects as a special student. Two years of passionate and persistent pursuit of these studies so impressed his teachers that the Faculty of the University by unanimous vote took the unprecedented step of admitting him to the senior class without examination. Immediately on his graduation in 1881 he resumed the work of the ministry, as pastor of the Congregational Church in Greenwich, Connecticut.

During these years the way was being prepared for Mr. Gordon to enter on his life work. Dr. Manning, with the strong support of the leaders of the Old South Congregation, had guided them through storm-tossed waters in their migration from the old Meetinghouse on Washington Street to their new home on Copley Square. His ministry of twenty-five years was virile, evangelical and scholarly. He was militant for the truth as he understood it, yet not of a controversial spirit. He cherished an outlook on the future which was not merely optimistic, but inspired and inspiring. It is regarded by the church as a favoring providence that his spirit continues with it up to this time through the presence of Mrs. Manning, and that his oldest daughter perpetuates his ministry as Mistress of the Manse.

Dr. Manning's health was permanently impaired by his military service during the Civil War. Increasing weakness compelled him to resign his active pastorate, taking effect on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his installation, in March 1882. He remained pastor *emeritus* till his death, November 29 of that year. Immediately after, the Church and Society, by unanimous votes, instructed their committees to extend a call to Mr. Gordon. They had been looking in this direction almost from the time when Dr. Manning's active service ended. However, they met with an obstacle which probably was unexpected. They were commissioned to invite a young minister to become the leader of the oldest Congregational Church in the largest city of New England. They regarded it as the strongest, and in its new location the most promising church in Boston, which was the headquarters of the denomination. But the young man was engaged in a prosperous and important work. He felt that it demanded his continued service. He was also reluctant as yet to assume the greater responsibility tendered to him. He promptly declined the call. The Old South, however, knew the kind of man it wanted and had found him. It placed his letter of declination again in the hands of its Committees, with instructions to confer with him further, "with a view to bringing him to us as our pastor in the earliest possible time." A year later the call was renewed and accepted.

The installation service, April 2, 1884, has become a landmark in the history of our denomination. A theological controversy was dividing it into opposing parties.

Committees in search of pastors were being warned by conservative leaders against selecting men "tainted with the higher criticism." The denomination was looked on with suspicion by strongly orthodox bodies which possessed ecclesiastical authority to discipline their ministers. The Congregational polity, because of its greater freedom, was under fire. Harvard University was regarded by many with aversion as a formidable seat of learning untempered by piety. Andover Seminary was defending itself against a determined effort to oust its professors on charges of heresy. One or more of these had been regularly preaching at the Old South while it was without a pastor. The prosecutors in that case, in their zeal to protect this representative Congregational church against the inroads of Unitarianism and other heresies, were jealously inquisitive concerning the attitude of its new minister. None of them probably had the slightest ill feeling toward him personally or any positive evidence that he held theological beliefs contrary to theirs. But they determined to test him by a thorough examination before consenting to his installation.

The Committees of the Church and Society knew the history of the Old South and its traditions. They were aware of the convictions of the elders who were pursuing hotfooted the Andover teachers of doctrines then repudiated by the majority of Congregationalists. They didn't intend to risk losing the minister of their choice through the adverse action of a council. Mr. Gordon was formally received into the membership of the church. Former pastors had on their reception consented to a confession of faith adopted by a council two hundred years before. Mr. Gordon made his own statement of belief, which was accepted unanimously, and he was welcomed by the members at a public reception as a brother beloved, to be their pastor. He was established in the parsonage.

In the letter missive calling the Council the churches were not invited to examine the candidate or to advise concerning his installation, but "to participate in the proceedings." The invitation was accepted by all the invited churches. It was however, received by the conservatives as a challenge The Council assembled in the afternoon in the midst of a snow storm. Some of its frost seems to have entered the chapel with the pastors and delegates.

The pastor elect offered credentials that could not be questioned. He brought the result of a dismissing Council at Greenwich giving him unqualified commendation. He read a comprehensive statement of his religious belief. It contained no apparent note of controversy. It was conceived on a high spiritual level. The candidate concluded by declaring himself a student of divine truth, and by expressing the fervent hope that he would find in his new surroundings spiritual companions in exploring the unsearchable riches of Christ.

A stenographic report has been preserved of the more than one hundred questions answered by the candidate in the examination which followed. They relate in the main to the nature of the Godhead, the meaning of the Atonement, and the effect of the crucifixion of Christ as the Son upon God the Father in persuading him to be reconciled to sinful men.

The protracted discussion of the Council in private session disarranged the plans which had been made to entertain at supper the pastors of neighboring churches. It postponed the time announced for the installation service. After some hours of suspense for those waiting outside the closed doors, the Council at last voted by a majority of about two thirds to proceed with the program for the evening. Two members who had accepted prominent parts withdrew. Their places were acceptably filled by others.

However disturbing this experience was at the time, it resulted in an important gain to the denomination. The Old South Church, by its loyalty to its minister, helped to convince the then dominant party of the unwisdom of attempting to make the tenets it defended tests of fellowship. It helped to ameliorate the disputes which culminated nearly ten years later in acknowledged freedom of the faith, at the meeting of the National Council in 1892 and the American Board the following year.

Of the effect of this experience on the minister, he has spoken for himself. In a sermon celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of his installation he said, "I now give thanks for the outspoken opposition to my views and purposes on the part of strong and brave men. I felt that I had come to live among men who had convictions, who had the courage to express them and to stand by them when it was unpopular to do so."

As an indication of the trend of theological thinking in churches calling themselves orthodox this Council had an exceptional interest. The members who took prominent part in it had been trained to defend the Calvinistic system. They were fixed in their belief that this was the only "plan of salvation" for lost souls. The questioning of any element of that logically constructed plan seemed to them a covert attack on the fortress of their faith. A favorite text of the leaders of New England Congregationalism was Ps. 11:3, "If the foundations be destroyed what can the righteous do?" A former pastor of Shawmut Church was said to have preached fourteen sermons from that text. Mr. Gordon frankly declared himself an inquirer into the things of God and men, and his purpose to press on eagerly and reverently in pursuit of truth. Already the spirit of inquiry had actively appeared. It seemed ready to examine what had been accepted as foundations of faith forever fixed. Their defenders could see no prospect, if these should be shaken, of a rebuilding on bases that could not be shaken. And they feared the consequences of a re-examination of them.

It is a satisfaction to record that most of these opponents lived long enough to enjoy fraternal relations with the minister of the Old South Church. One of the most active of them, after becoming acquainted with him, used to speak in terms of unqualified admiration of his intellectual ability, his Christian character and his personal charm.

On some subjects then much debated among ministers, Mr. Gordon frankly acknowledged that his conclusions were not fully formed. Concerning them he said, "I believe that the mental habit of suspense is rational, healthy, fruitful of much peace, and an indispensable safeguard against the waste of intellectual and spiritual power." However, a comparison of his published lectures and sermons with this statement to the Council indicates that the trend of his thinking had been already established by strenuous study and earnestly sought divine guidance. He had become convinced that he had a vision of a worthier interpretation of God, a truer idea of man as God's offspring, and a nobler conception of the worth of religion than the fathers of the church had known. The clearer revelation of what he then saw is outlined in two of his productions nearly a quarter of a century later. One of them is an article in the Harvard Theological Review of 1908, "The Collapse of the New England Theology." The other is the sermon he delivered as preacher for the International Congregational Council in Edinburgh the same year. He called it "The Republic of Souls." It is a noble exposition of the progressive revelation of truth.

An illustration of his habit of thorough independent thinking through a subject occurred not long ago. When the controversy was at its climax over the question of a probation after death, a sermon of his was published by request entitled "A Vision of the Dead." In it he gave reasons for the hope that those who die without faith in Christ may not be forever beyond the pale of divine mercy. It had an extensive circulation. Twenty years later when it had been sometime out of print he was asked to revise it for a new edition. After examination he returned the copy for the press without alteration.

Of the varied phases of Dr. Gordon's ministry perhaps the most conspicuous is his service to youth in schools and colleges. In 1885, the year following his installation as pastor of the Old South, Harvard inaugurated a new experiment by making all religious exercises voluntary on the part of the students. It established a Board of five preachers of different denominations. The youngest of these was Dr. Gordon. It was only five years after the University had conferred on him his Bachelor's degree that it entrusted to him this large responsibility. He served on that Board for four years continuously and then after a period of release because of other urgent claims he returned for a new term of three years. Here began his friendship with Phillips Brooks, also a member of the original Board. This intimacy continued till suspended by death. Twenty years after the Board was constituted, Professor Francis G. Peabody, Chairman of the Board, published a volume of addresses entitled "Mornings in the College Chapel." He dedicated it to Dr. Gordon, in a beautiful poem which includes these lines:

Still at your post you stand, high up in the lighthouse
tower,
Guarding the way of life, speaking the word of power;
Resolute, tender, wise, free in the love of the truth,
Tending the flame of the Christ, as it marks the channel
of youth.

Dr. Gordon in later years served three full terms on the Board of Overseers of the University. As president of the Alumni he recently delivered the Commencement Day Address.

As a matter of course, many of the students found their way across the river from Cambridge to the Old South in Copley Square and to Trinity, where Phillips Brooks ministered. To their numbers Boston University, the Conservatory of Music and other institutions of the vicinity have contributed. This preponderance of young men and women in the congregations on Sunday morning would be an inspiration to any preacher. As years went by, the minister of the Old South was called on to give courses of lectures at Harvard, Yale, and other universities, also baccalaureate sermons and occasional addresses, taxing his strength to the utmost. Henry Ward Beecher, when sought for as lecturer and preacher to all sorts of assemblies, used to say that whatever he could do to increase the streams of spiritual wealth flowing into the reservoir of Plymouth Church he gladly undertook; whatever streams carried such wealth away from it he avoided. This has been Dr. Gordon's policy. He has put first the welfare of his own people. And they have recognized it in a spirit of mutual appreciation. This relation he has expressed in the dedication of his latest volume of midweek addresses, to "the people of the Old South Church and Congregation, in grateful acknowledgement of their unsurpassable loyalty and in deep, enduring affection."

Notwithstanding the generous service he has rendered to the public, complaints used to be heard, especially in the earlier years of his ministry, that he confined himself too closely to his study and to his own church. He was not often seen in social assemblies or miscellaneous public meetings. But results have justified his determination to conserve his strength for systematic study. He has kept in touch with the literary life of our time by association with the famous Saturday Club, and a few other organizations which have afforded stimulus and recreation. He has not failed in personal ministry to members of his congregation in their times of need. And he has identified himself so completely with the Old South Church that he is one with it. He knows not only its history and its traditions but its historic spirit. Through its records he is intimately acquainted with the ministers who have served it for the two hundred and fifty years of its existence. He knows the leading laymen in all its successive generations. He interprets its chief events by the policy it has consistently maintained through the entire period.

The intellectual and spiritual life of the church is recorded in the volumes which its minister has issued at intervals of from two to four years during his pastorate. Looking back over the two centuries and a half one may see that the church has received some distinctive gift from each of its sixteen ministers. It appears to us in studying this history that in certain directions the present ministry is intellectually and spiritually the most fruitful of them all. Dr. Gordon's literary output, in the extent and variety of its themes, when compared with the Bibliography in Mr. Hill's history of the Old South, surpasses that of any of his predecessors. Each of the principal ten volumes which bear his name has a definite purpose, and is the fruit of widely extended but carefully chosen courses of reading. As an example, the Lowell Institute Lectures, "The New Epoch for Faith," aim to appraise, for the religious view of the world, the value of the nineteenth century. For this purpose, he says, he has read "chiefly those great books that constitute the watershed of the century's opinion and feeling." The lectures give evidence of thorough study of such historians and statesmen as Carlyle, Gladstone, Disraeli, Thomas Jefferson, Daniel Webster, Abraham Lincoln. His week-end addresses, "Aspect of the Infinite Mystery," are rich in reflections on the great philosophers, such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Paul, Kant, Spencer and Emerson, and the poets such as Homer, the Hebrew Psalmists, Dante, Milton, Goethe, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning, and Whittier. More than seventy authors are mentioned in this volume.

One charm of Dr. Gordon's preaching is his interpreting the thoughts of great thinkers of all the ages for the average busy men and women, expressing their aspirations and ideals more clearly than they had thought them out for themselves.

Frequently the lecture room has been crowded with young men and women students, business and professional men, toilers by hand and brain, who have heard their varied experiences expressed in language which dignified their daily lives and interpreted for them the human and divine sympathy supremely revealed in the great strong Christ, Redeemer of mankind. These courses of midweek lectures, represented by this latest volume, were begun several years ago when the traditional prayer meeting had failed to bring together the families of the congregation scattered through suburban districts. They have well rewarded the labor in preparation which the minister has bestowed on them. This midwinter course has become a recognized religious and literary institution of the city. It is there that the pastor is at home with his own church family and friends. There he speaks of his personal experience, with autobiographic glimpses, discourses of his favorite authors, and allows expression to his sense of humor. The lecture method of the midweek service is a return to the established custom of the church in its earlier years.

During these thirty-five years our democratic system of government has been severely tested. Its principles have been clearly set forth to the Old South congregation, and they have been loyally adopted. The issues of the world war which began five years ago were plainly outlined. The imperative duty of conquering Prussian militarism was proclaimed from the beginning. With hardly an exception the members of the congregation were busily working to fight the enemies of liberty, on the field, in camps, hospitals, centres of rest and recreation for soldiers and sailors, and in their homes. The volume of patriotic addresses, "The Appeal to the Nation," published last year attests the strength and fervor of loyalty to our American Union which has continued unabated in this church from its earliest days.

The associate ministers of the Old South have contributed their full share to its prosperity, in their preaching and manifold pastoral labors. Reverend Dr. Allen E. Cross filled this office for ten years.

Reverend Willis H. Butler has just completed a ministry of seven years. They are now pastors of important New England churches which are thus linked more closely with their older sister, the Old South. Without a break in the service, Reverend Archibald Black, during the last five years the pastor of South Church, Concord, N. H., was welcomed as associate minister.

A long list might be made of men and women who have upheld the honorable position of the church in the community during these thirty-five years. They have been influential in professional and business life, public officials of the city, state and nation, administrators in educational and benevolent enterprises. Since it is beyond the scope of this article to chronicle their varied services, a mention of one may stand as representative of them all. No name is more tenderly cherished when the recent history of our church is being considered than that of Samuel Johnson. A prosperous merchant, giving generously of his time and thought, as well as his money, to enterprises for promoting the public welfare, the Old South Church had a place in his affection second to no other. He identified with it his family and his closest friends. The fine hospitality of his home was consecrated to its service. He devoted himself to making it an influential factor in the missionary work of the denomination at home and in foreign lands. He was a leading spirit in all its interests for half a century, so wise, so capable, so generous in his sympathies that his associates loved him as well as trusted his leadership. He seemed to have the Church in vision through the seven generations of its past, and he looked to the coming generations with faith as strong as his confidence was assured in those who had gone. In that spirit he regarded the members with whom he was associated. They represented to him the honorable character they inherited from the church of earlier times, and the promise of its usefulness for generations to come. Like many other families whose names are revered among us, he has left as his heritage his children and his children's children to perpetuate his service in the Old South Church.

This continuity of family life, which has been such a source of strength to it for two hundred and fifty years, must be maintained loyally as far as is possible. It is noteworthy that only one change, and that caused by removal from the city, has occurred for the last decade in the Board of six deacons. Other important trusts connected with the various ministries of the Society, the distribution of its funds and the direction of its affairs have been faithfully administered by those whose many obligations were not allowed to interfere with the claims of their church.

Of the ministries of the Church in its local field only barest mention can be made. Its annual gifts to the Boston City Missionary Society have always led all the other churches, and its successive presidents have been members of the Old South. Its own local mission, Hope Chapel, enlisted many of its members as teachers in its weekday and Sunday services till changes in the neighborhood made its continuance no longer necessary.

While the Bible School of the Old South has not been large since its congregation has chiefly removed from the immediate neighborhood to suburban homes, it maintains a notably successful children's school during the morning hour of public worship, and a flourishing Bible Class at noon, conducted on modern educational ideas. There are also attractive classes for women, young men and young women, with experienced teachers. Dr. Gordon has often and earnestly impressed on the people the importance of the study of the Bible. The Old South Men's Club and the Women's Sewing Circle are valued and prosperous organizations.

The church has always been an important factor in the religious and civic life of the community and the Commonwealth, and probably never more than during the present pastorate. The Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A., and other institutions for the public welfare have found in the Old South not only a reservoir of financial help but a place where the ablest men and women could be enlisted for service. At the celebration last May of its two hundred and fiftieth anniversary, the Governor of the State and the Mayor of the City testified to its influence for good in public affairs.

The members of our church, individually and collectively, have a precious heritage, a royal privilege, and a great responsibility. It has been preserved in increasing strength through the love and labors of successive generations. It offers rewards in Christian fellowship, religious instruction and spiritual life as great as its members will receive. It includes all ages and all classes. Many are members of families whose names have been on its rolls for half a century, some for a much longer period. Some are students whose association with it is necessarily short. A larger proportion are wage earners than is supposed by outsiders. The inheritance, the privilege and the responsibility belong alike to all according to the measure of their activities. By their presence at its services, their share in its ministries, their prayerful interest in the welfare of its members and their loyal guardianship of its honor, each adds to its usefulness and its excellence. Every worthy member of the Old South Church is able to say, "Lord, I love the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth."

This is in outline the history of our church during the thirty-five years of Dr. Gordon's ministry to the present time. Though the excitement and turmoil throughout the world continues, the minister and his co-workers look forward serenely to years of still greater opportunities and more fruitful service.

Dr. Gordon's Hymn "Years and Aspirations," written on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his installation, may well find a place at the conclusion of this sketch.

LEAD *me, Lord, through all my days,*
In Thy great and wondrous ways,
Lift my heart to grander hours,
Hold me with Thy heavenly powers.

Of the Past may I still keep
Things divine both high and deep,
Morning light and evening glow
That have ever blessed me so.

Memories that ever shine;
Friends unseen but friends still mine;
Service sweet in high reward;
Spirits blest in dear regard.

Tender sympathies and tears,
Precious store of noble years;
Visions wide on pathways wild,
Chastened thought again a child!

Trust in Thee that surer grows;
Human love that fears no foes;
Faith that to thy heart belong,
Worlds now lost in woe and wrong.

Show me, Lord, Thy word of grace —
Christ, Thy glory in his face;
That I through my fleeting hour,
Serve Thy kingdom in Thy power.

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